

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SP-02 ICA-11 AID-05 EB-08 NSC-05

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0010

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONROVIA 4965

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, LI

SUBJECT: GOL RESPONSE TO JUNE 20, 1978 LETTER FROM PRESIDENT
CARTER TO PRESIDENT TOLBERT

1. I MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER C. CECIL DENNIS, JR.
ON JULY 2, 1978 AT HIS REQUEST TO DISCUSS THE JUNE 20,
1978 LETTER FROM PRESIDENT CARTER TO PRESIDENT TOLBERT.
USAID DIRECTOR STAN SIEGEL ACCOMPANIED ME. DENNIS
SAID HE NEEDED TO GAIN A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE
LETTER IN TERMS OF THE NATURE OF PROGRAMS CONTEMPLATED,
POSSIBLE DATES OF THE IMPLEMENTATION, LEVEL OF U.S.
CONTRIBUTION, AND GOL FUNDING REQUIREMENTS.

2. DENNIS FIRST EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER THE PROPOSED
TERMINATION OF USAID CONTRACT SUPPORT TO THE INSTITUTE
OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION ONE YEAR EARLY, SAYING THAT
THIS POSED "AN ACUTE PROBLEM FOR US." DIRECTOR SIEGEL
NOTED THAT, ALTHOUGH THIS MATTER HAD NOT BEEN RAISED
IN PRESIDENT CARTER'S LETTER, SYMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING
WOULD BE GIVEN IN WASHINGTON TO RETAIN CONTRACT SUPPORT
FOR IPA IF TRAINING EMPHASIS COULD BE SHIFTED MORE TO
RURAL ADMINISTRATION, INCLUDING COUNTY OFFICIALS AND
OFFICIALS INVOLVED IN AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS IN THE
COUNTRYSIDE. HE NOTED THAT USAID HAD INDICATED THAT
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EVEN IF THE PRESENT PROJECT WAS TERMINATED ONE YEAR EARLY,
A NEW PROJECT MEETING THE GUIDELINES FOR RURAL AREAS
COULD BE GIVEN SYMPATHETIC CONSIDERATION. I REFERRED ALSO
TO THE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE TO US OF KEEPING IN STEP WITH
THE INTENT OF CONGRESS ON THESE MATTERS.

3. THE MINISTER INQUIRED CONCERNING THE ARRIVAL

DATE OF THE RIVER BLINDNESS SURVEY TEAM. I SAID THAT THIS WAS NOW BEING WORKED OUT AND THAT WE ANTICIPATED EARLY RESPONSE.

4. DENNIS ASKED IF THE REFERENCE TO IMPROVEMENT OF THE FORMAL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM INCLUDED UNIVERSITY TRAINING. I REPLIED THAT THE PROGRAMS ENVISAGED WOULD BE AT THE ELEMENTARY, SECONDARY AND TEACHER TRAINING LEVELS, WITH THE U.S. EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL FOUNDATION CONTINUING TO CONTRIBUTE AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL.

5. DENNIS COMMENTED THAT THE GOL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM EMPHASIZED REACHING OUT TO THE LOW-INCOME AND RURAL GROUPS BUT THAT IT HAD LIMITED RESOURCES. HE SAID THAT THE GOL WAS WORRIED THAT THE U.S. PROPOSALS WOULD REQUIRE FINDING ADDITIONAL FUNDS AT A TIME WHEN THE GOL BUDGET HAD SEVERE CONSTRAINTS. DIRECTOR SIEGEL AGREED THAT PROJECTS IN EDUCATION ARE COSTLY, AS ARE THOSE IN HEALTH. I REMINDED THE MINISTER THAT WE WERE CURRENTLY INVOLVED WITH THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH IN AN AMBITIOUS PROGRAM TO EXTEND HEALTH SERVICES DEEPER INTO THE COUNTRYSIDE.

6. DENNIS ASKED IF WE COULD PROVIDE AN ESTIMATE OF THE TIME-SPAN FROM THE DATE OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S VISIT TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS. HE COMMENTED THAT PRESIDENT TOLBERT ON RETURN FROM CHINA IS ABLE TO ANNOUNCE "RIGHT
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AWAY" A \$23 MILLION LOAN AGREEMENT. WE REPLIED THAT THE LOW-COST HOUSING PROGRAM WAS ALREADY BEING IMPLEMENTED, THAT THE RIVER BLINDNESS STUDY TEAM WOULD BE ARRIVING SOON, AND THAT THE FIRST STUDY PHASE OF THE TEN-YEAR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM HAD BEGUN.

7. I TOLD DENNIS THAT DIRECTOR SIEGEL AND I WOULD BE WORKING WITH THE MINISTERS OF PLANNING, HEALTH, AGRICULTURE, EDUCATION, AND LANDS AND MINES (THE LATTER WITH REGARD TO POTENTIAL USE OF SATELLITE IMAGERY). HE NOTED THAT PRESIDENT TOLBERT WILL WANT TO DISCUSS THE JUNE 20 LETTER WITH ME.

8. COMMENT: TWO MAIN GOL CONCERNS STAND OUT FROM THIS CONVERSATION: (A) THE FEAR THAT THE GOL WILL BE ASKED TO INCREASE SUBSTANTIALLY ITS BUDGET ALLOCATION IN FIELDS CHOSEN BY THE U.S. FOR SUPPORT, DESPITE A TIGHT BUDGET SITUATION; AND (B) THAT THE TIME-SPAN INVOLVED IN BRINGING TO IMPLEMENTATION THE PROJECTS SELECTED WILL BE SO LONG AS TO ATTENUATE THEIR IMPACT. TOLBERT HAS OFTEN POINTED OUT TO ME THAT IT IS IMPORTANT FOR HIS GOVERNMENT TO BE ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE TO DOUBTERS THE PRACTICAL VALUE TO

LIBERIA OF ITS SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S.
CONVERSATIONS WITH GOL OFFICIALS SUCH AS THIS ONE WITH
THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAVE MADE IT OBVIOUS TO ME THAT TOO
MANY GOL OFFICIALS HAVE ONLY A VAGUE AWARENESS OF THE
BASIC FACTS OF OUR AID PROGRAM, DESPITE EFFORTS WE HAVE
MADE TO PUBLICIZE IT. I HAVE THEREFORE INSTRUCTED ALL
MISSION OFFICIALS TO SEEK OPPORTUNITIES TO POINT OUT THE
CONTINUING HISTORY OF U.S. DEVELOPMENT AID TO LIBERIA, ITS
SUBSTANTIAL GRANT ELEMENT AND THE SIGNIFICANT RESULTS TO
DATE. MEANWHILE, I WOULD URGENTLY WELCOME ANY FURTHER
DEPARTMENT/USAID/W VIEWS OR GUIDANCE ON PRESIDENT CARTER'S
LETTER WHICH I CAN USE IN UPCOMING MEETING WITH PRESIDENT
TOLBERT. DETAILED COMMENTS ON PARAS THREE AND FOUR OF
PRESIDENT'S 20 JUNE LETTER WOULD BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL.
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